



# Railroads, Buses and Trucks

**D**ISCUSSING results of railroad operation in 1930, the annual report of the Interstate Commerce Commission states: "If railway finances were suffering only from the fact that a recession in business is being experienced as in other industries of this country and of the world, it might be sufficient to point out that in judging of railway income one should in fairness consider the good and bad years together. *But a different and more threatening financial difficulty confronts the railways. This is the effect of the competition of other forms of transportation.*"

One of the principal factors in this competition is the motor vehicle. We have a vast network of good roads, constructed and maintained in large part by public funds, and originally intended for private automobiles and other vehicles of similar size. Upon these highways thousands of large and heavy buses and

trucks are being operated in competition with the railroads. These vehicles are aided by unjust and unfair advantages.

In the first place, the railroads are strictly regulated by the federal government in every branch of their operations. Buses and trucks have no such regulation. In the second place, the railroads pay every penny of their costs of furnishing service. Buses and trucks pay gasoline taxes and varying license fees, which usually do not meet the full cost of their use of the highways, but leave part of this cost to be paid by the public in taxes.

The railroads are not seeking any advantages. They are only asking that other means of transportation be deprived of unfair advantages. They are asking, first, that their competitors stand on their own feet as the railroads themselves do, by paying all their own costs, instead of having these costs partly paid from pub-

lie taxes; and, second, that these competitors be regulated as the railroads are.

In other words, the railroads are asking only for fair play—in order that all means of transportation shall compete for traffic on equal terms.

Adequate rail service is essential to national prosperity. The railroads want only a fair chance: can you afford to give them less?

